

REMARKS

The present application was filed on August 14, 2001 with claims 1-18.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner: (i) rejected claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-11, 13 and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,764,975 to Taniguchi et al. (hereinafter "Taniguchi"); and (ii) acknowledged allowable subject matter in claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18.

Regarding the formal drawings, as per the Examiner's request, we are enclosing a copy of the formal drawings and the transmittal letter originally filed on November 13, 2001.

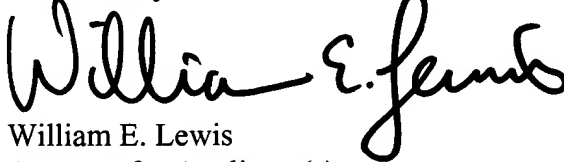
In this response, Applicants respectfully traverse the §102(b) rejection of claims 1-18 based on the belief that Taniguchi fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of the claimed invention.

Nonetheless, in a sincere effort to expedite the present application through to issuance, Applicants amend the claims of the present application.

More particularly, in view of the indication by the Examiner of allowable subject matter in dependent claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18, Applicants have rewritten dependent claims 6, 12 and 18 into independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Also, Applicants have incorporated the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 2, 8 and 14 respectively into independent claims 1, 7 and 13. Applicants thus cancel claims 2, 8 and 14 without prejudice.

In view of the above, Applicant believes that claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-18 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,



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